Distr.
LIMITED

A/CONF.184/PC/L.2
28 May 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

EUROPEAN POSITION PAPER ON THE DRAFT REPORT OF UNISPACE III

Working paper submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on behalf of the following member States of the European Space Agency (ESA) and States having cooperation agreements with ESA: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland

1. The European Space Agency (ESA) and its member States welcome the new version of the draft report of UNISPACE III (A/CONF.184/PC/L.1) prepared by the Secretariat. This document, to a large extent, reflects many of the deliberations and positions put forward in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space by various delegations prior to the decision of holding the said event and during the work of the Advisory Committee.

2. In this position paper, ESA and its member States have chosen to make general comments on the draft report. However, each of the ESA member States will then make more specific comments on the various paragraphs or sections during the forty-first session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, when the draft report of UNISPACE III is to be discussed.

3. The comments and suggestions are divided in three separate sections: the structure of the report, the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and the text of the report.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

4. The Secretariat has produced a well-structured and rich document. Nevertheless the document, given all the specific topics it covers and which it must contain, is very long. In order to have a document which can be circulated and read by the various target groups, it is indispensable to produce a short and concise executive summary. The executive summary should cover the international context, highlight some globally important space applications and have an index with the chapters and sections.

5. To facilitate the reading of the report, it would be beneficial to have all proposed actions listed together in one separate chapter.

VIENNA DECLARATION ON SPACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

6. The Vienna Declaration as it reads today is too vague and needs a stronger message. It should be divided in two parts:

(a) An introduction, which is more visionary, covering the reasons for conducting space research, attempting to answer questions pertinent to all, such as the origins of the Earth etc.;

(b) The second part of the Declaration should cover the specific action programmes. For each action line, the implementing partners should clearly be identified, as well as, if feasible, the time-frame and budget for implementing the proposal.

TEXT OF THE REPORT

7. This third section covers some general suggestions from ESA member States related to the draft report. While the report is considered to be too long already, it is thought that the following areas need to be covered or given greater emphasis if a balanced report is to be produced:

(a) In order to raise the visibility, a more detailed description and analysis of space applications within the United Nations system would improve the draft report. Given the fact that UNISPACE III is the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, such a description of how the various programmes and agencies within the United Nations use space applications within their mandate is important. References to the actions of these organizations should also, when appropriate, be incorporated in the text (compare with document A/AC.105/675 of 12 May 1997);

(b) The Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82) was held 16 years ago. At the time, many recommendations were adopted. A creative and constructive assessment on the ways used to implement those recommendations would improve the report, as well as give a positive message to the Member States of the United Nations (compare with document A/AC.105/692 of 12 January 1998).

8. Although briefly touched upon in the later part of the draft report, a deeper reflection on what will be the consequences of UNISPACE III for the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be useful.

9. UNISPACE III being dedicated to the new millennium, it seems advisable to open the perspective for the young. Many issues are of global concern, such as the environment, and will have an impact on future generations. It is therefore important to strengthen the outreach programme for youth.

10. In the text technology transfer is frequently mentioned; in many fields it would be more appropriate to talk of transfer of knowledge, which is a concrete action that takes place and has been supported within the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

11. The document should place less emphasis on the technological differences between developed and developing countries. Space technology has permitted many developing countries to "leapfrog" over aspects of the industrial revolution straight into the information age. Examples should be highlighted in the report.

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LIMITED

A/CONF.184/PC/L.3
29 May 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

DRAFT PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (UNISPACE III)

Note by the Secretariat

The draft provisional rules of procedure for the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), contained in the attached annex, have been prepared based upon the recommendations contained in the report of the Working Group of the Whole that was adopted by the Advisory Committee in 1998 (A/AC.105/697 and Corr.1, para. 55), and taking into account the practices of previous United Nations conferences. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, UNISPACE III will be convened as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space open to all States Members of the United Nations. As agreed during informal discussions in the Advisory Committee, the rules of procedure cover only those aspects deemed necessary to account for the specific nature of UNISPACE III and the established practices of the Committee.

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Annex

DRAFT PROVISIONAL RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE (UNISPACE III)

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I. SCOPE OF RULES

Application of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Rule 1

Any matter arising at the Conference, which is convened as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space open to all States Members, that is not covered by these rules of procedure shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

II. MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATION

Composition of delegations

Rule 2

1. The delegation of each State participating in the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and such other representatives, alternate representatives, advisers, experts or persons of similar status, including those from space-related industries, as are deemed necessary or desirable.

2. The head of delegation may designate an alternate representative or an adviser to act as a representative.

Submission of credentials and provisional participation

Rule 3

1. The credentials of representatives and the names of members of a delegation shall be submitted to the Secretariat of the Conference, if possible not less than one week before the opening of the Conference. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Any later change in the composition of the delegations shall also be submitted to the secretariat of the Conference.

2. A Credentials Committee of nine members shall be appointed at the beginning of the Conference. Its composition shall be based on that of the Credentials Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its most recent session. The Credentials Committee shall elect its own officers including a Chairman and such other officers as it may consider necessary. It shall examine the credentials of representatives and report to the Conference without delay.

3. Pending a decision of the Conference on their credentials, representatives shall be entitled to participate provisionally in the Conference.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE

Main committees

Rule 4

The Conference shall establish two main committees, Committee I and Committee II. Each State participating in the Conference may be represented by one representative on each main committee established by the Conference. It may assign to these committees such alternative representatives and advisers as may be required.

Technical Forum

Rule 5

In addition to the committees, the Conference shall establish a Technical Forum as a technical body of the Conference. The Technical Forum will consist of technical presentations relating to the agenda of the Conference, as well as additional components of the Conference, such as workshops and seminars, poster sessions, a space exhibition and public evening lectures. The Conference may, in addition, request that any substantive agenda item be dealt with in the Technical Forum. The Technical Forum shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Technical Forum, who will be responsible for the general conduct of the business of the Forum and the coordination of its work.

Other subsidiary bodies

Rule 6

The Conference, main committees and Technical Forum may establish such working groups as they deem necessary for the performance of their functions.

IV. OFFICERS

General Committee

Rule 7

1. The General Committee of the Conference shall consist of the following 10 officers: President, Vice-President and Rapporteur-General of the Plenary; Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of Committee I; Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of Committee II; and Chairman of the Technical Forum. The President, or in his absence the Vice-President, shall serve as Chairman of the General Committee.

2. The current bureau of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space shall continue as members of the General Committee of the Conference in the respective functions of President, Vice-President and Rapporteur-General of the Plenary. In addition, the current Chairmen of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space shall be included as members of the General Committee of the Conference.

3. The other five officers shall be elected by the Conference from among the representatives of the States participating in the Conference on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. Thus, one officer shall be selected from each of the following regional groups: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Western Europe and other States.

4. The General Committee shall assist the President in the general conduct of the business of the Conference and shall ensure the coordination of its work.

V. OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

Role of the Secretary-General

Rule 8

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations or his representative shall open the first meeting of the Conference and preside until the Conference has elected its President.

2. The Secretary-General or his representative shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Conference and its subsidiary organs.

3. The Secretary-General or his representative shall direct the staff required by the Conference.

Decisions concerning organization

Rule 9

1. The Conference shall, at its first meeting:

(a) Adopt its rules of procedure;

(b) Elect its officers and constitute its subsidiary bodies;

(c) Adopt its agenda based upon the provisional agenda endorsed by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session;

(d) Decide on the organization of its work.

2. Recommendations resulting from pre-Conference consultations shall, in principle, be acted upon without further discussion.

VI. DECISION-MAKING

General agreement

Rule 10

The Conference being a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the members and participants of the Conference shall, in accordance with the established practice of that Committee, endeavour on all occasions to ensure that the work of the Conference is conducted in such a way that the Conference will be able to reach agreement in its work, and the adoption of its report, without the need for voting.

VII. LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Languages of the Conference

Rule 11

Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be the languages of the Conference.

Interpretation and recording services

Rule 12

1. Speeches made in a language of the Conference during meetings of the Plenary or main committees shall be interpreted into other such languages.

2. A representative may speak in a language other than a language of the Conference if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the languages of the Conference.

3. Sound recordings of meetings of the Conference and its main committees shall be made and kept in accordance with the practice of the United Nations. Unless otherwise decided, no such recordings shall be made of the Technical Forum or the meetings of any working group.

Official documents

Rule 13

1. All draft versions of the report of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies to be issued during the Conference, as well as final documents of the Conference for submission to the General Assembly, will be translated and issued in all languages of the Conference.

2. Working papers intended as in-session documents for the Conference and submitted in one of the languages of the Conference by States Members of the United Nations shall be translated and issued in all languages of the Conference in time for consideration by the Conference.

3. National papers shall be issued only in the languages of original submission and shall be submitted by the Member States in a sufficient number of copies for distribution to the Conference. Abstracts of these papers, submitted in one of the official languages of the United Nations, shall be translated and issued in all languages of the Conference.

4. Documents submitted by international organizations, as well as invited representatives of space-related industry, shall be governed by rules 14 to 16.

VIII. OTHER PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Organizations within the United Nations system and international organizations having permanent observer status with the General Assembly or the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Rule 14

1. Organizations within the United Nations system and international organizations having permanent observer status with the General Assembly of the United Nations or the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space shall be permitted to deliver general statements in the Plenary. The statements shall be limited to seven minutes. The full text of the statements may be circulated in writing.

2. These organizations shall also be permitted to circulate papers in the Plenary and Committee I and Committee II during their consideration of substantive agenda items. Time permitting, the chairmen of the Plenary, Committee I and Committee II may provide these organizations with the opportunity to make statements on substantive items and to participate in discussions.

3. Papers of these organizations shall be issued only in the languages of original submission and shall be submitted in a sufficient number of copies for distribution to the Conference. Abstracts of the papers, submitted in one of the official languages of the United Nations, shall be translated into and issued in all languages of the Conference.

International organizations not having permanent observer status with the General Assembly or the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Rule 15

1. International organizations not having permanent observer status with the General Assembly of the United Nations or the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space but having been invited to the Conference shall be permitted to submit general statements in writing to the Plenary.

2. These organizations shall also be permitted to circulate papers in the Plenary and Committee I and Committee II during their consideration of substantive agenda items. In addition, those organizations specifically called upon to prepare reports to the Conference shall be permitted to circulate those papers.

3. Papers of these organizations shall be issued only in the languages of original submission and shall be submitted in a sufficient number of copies for distribution to the Conference.

Space-related industry

Rule 16

1. Upon invitation, representative of space-related industries may conduct presentations at workshops and seminars organized in conjunction with the Conference. Such technical presentations may take place throughout the Conference period. The time allocated to such presentations may be limited to no more than 30 minutes.

2. A limited number of space-industry round-table discussions may be established, with participation by high-level representatives of industry and heads or high-ranking officials of space agencies. As far as possible these should be scheduled at a time that most delegates, including representatives of States, are able to attend.

3. Papers relating to these presentations and discussions shall be issued only in the languages of original submission and shall be submitted in a sufficient number of copies for distribution to the Conference.

IX. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Method of suspension

Rule 17

Any of these rules of procedure may be suspended by the Conference provided that 24 hours' notice of the proposal for the suspension has been given, which may be waived if no representative objects. Any such suspension shall be limited to a specific and stated purpose and to a period required to achieve that purpose.

Method of amendment

Rule 18

These rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Conference taken after the General Committee has reported on the proposed amendment.